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BETTER GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE, by Gov. Dennis Daugaard

I am often asked what I have found most surprising in my eight months as Governor. I would have to say it is this: A Governor is very busy.

Now I know that seems obvious, but I can tell you that even as Lieutenant Governor or as a candidate for Governor, I'm not sure I was aware of the diversity of topics that a Governor would handle in a single day or even a single hour.

Thinking back over my first eight months on the job:

- We had a legislative session in which we worked hard to pass a state budget that eliminated our structural deficit and put our state on sound financial footing
- We experienced significant flooding in many East River counties, and then dealt with Missouri River floods, which consumed almost all of my time for several weeks, and still brings about new issues almost every day
- We dealt with a murder at the state penitentiary, and mourned the loss of a corrections officer, two policemen, two soldiers, and a state firefighter
- We announced an effort to fight the pine beetle infestation that threatens to destroy the Black Hills forest
- And, every day, we have worked very hard to create jobs and encourage businesses to grow and expand here in South Dakota

As Governor, I've been a spokesperson and a salesman for our state. In addition, I've also been a crisis manager. All along, I've also been the CEO of a 14,000-employee, \$4 billion enterprise called state government.

It may not be my most glamorous role, but I believe that a big part of my responsibility as Governor is to see that South Dakota's state government is operated openly and efficiently. In short, I want to create a better government for the people of South Dakota.

So, I want to announce the "Better Government" initiative, which I launched shortly after I took office and which has already achieved some results. This initiative has three focuses: Red Tape Review, Open Government, and e-Government.

Red Tape Review:

Bureaucracies tend to become more complex over time. Many elected leaders believe they should measure their success by how many new laws they were able to pass. Those laws in turn

spawn regulations. Over time, those regulations become longer and more complicated – and they place an ever-increasing burden on our businesses and our citizens.

Certainly at the federal level we have seen a regulatory regime that has run amok. I am determined that we will not let that happen in South Dakota. At my first Cabinet meeting, I instructed Cabinet members to take a close look at their statutes, rules, and policies.

I'm proud that my Cabinet has taken this head-on, and the results of what they have proposed to me is impressive: In total, my Cabinet has identified 386 sections of state code and pages upon pages of regulations, totaling 43,424 words, that can be repealed.

And we are just getting started. I hope to inject real-world common sense into our regulatory scheme because businesses need simplicity, predictability, and consistency. As they continue their work, I have asked my Cabinet members to reach out to you – their "customers" – to get your advice. If you have ideas, I hope you'll let us know.

Open Government:

Just as government regulations should be concise, needful, and easy to understand, so should the workings of government be transparent to all. I believe strongly that, unless there is a clear, compelling, and legal reason, government information should be open and easily accessible.

My office operates on that principle, and we are working hard to bring that same attitude to all of state government. It is a cultural change for some, but it is important. Here are some of the things we have already done:

We have announced that the invitation lists for the Governor's Golf Classic, the Pheasant Hunt, and the Buffalo Roundup will be released each year, omitting only the names of business prospects.

We have opened Valhalla, Gov. Peter Norbeck's cabin in Custer State Park, for regular public tours, and have made public the list of those staying at Valhalla. In fact, my office recently gave the entire list to the Rapid City Journal, at its request.

This summer, we also opened up the Governor's Mansion for regular public tours for the first time.

These are the first steps in an effort that will not end – to continue to put even more information about state government online in a way that allows anyone to easily find it and make use of it.

It is part of my more general philosophy that, to the extent we are able, state government should provide as much information as it can, as quickly as it can to anyone who asks, whether they are members of the press or members of the public.

e-Government:

Finally, just as I want to make it easier to find information about state government online, I also want to make it easier to interact with government online. We serve the people, and like any successful business in South Dakota, we need to put first those whom we serve. Creating expanded opportunities to do personal or professional business with the state online makes a lot

of sense today, and even more sense tomorrow. My motto is that I want our citizens to be "online, not waiting in line" when they interact with state government.

Our Bureau of Information and Telecommunications undertook a comprehensive inventory of every manner in which people interact with state government – anything from business license applications and tax returns to license plate renewals and state park campsite reservations. We have already automated some business licenses and will continue to put more online.

Moving interactions with the state online adds efficiency in numerous ways. For the costumer, the process can be done without visiting a state office or mailing in a form. For the state, online submissions don't need to be manually entered into a computer. Over time, the move to e-Government will create opportunities for significant efficiencies in state government. Please follow our progress at sd.gov/bettergovernment

In government, as in business, it is the little things that matter. My goal is to create a culture in state government that is centered around the citizens, the voters, the taxpayers we are here to serve. By constantly striving to cut red tape, to be more open, and to put more online, we are creating a better state government that is a better steward of your tax dollars and a better servant of the people.